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NICARAGUA/U.S. KURTIS: The weekend downing in Nicaragua of a U.S.-made helicopter used by rebels fighting the Sandinista regime was not the first time a contra aircraft has been destroyed in that country. But it is the first time an American has been killed in that three-year-old, U.S.-financed rebel war. Mike O'Connor reports from Managua.

O'CONNOR: Reagan administration sources now confirm that at least one and perhaps two of the men killed in this helicopter were Americans. A total of three men died when the aircraft was brought down during an attack on a Nicaragua military school Saturday. The Nicaraguan government says the assault was part of an open war now being waged by the United States against the Sandinista regime. In Washington, sources told CBS News the men were mercenaries who in the past may have worked for the CIA. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of the Intelligence Committee says the CIA denies being involved in the attack.

SEN.\DANIEL\PATRICK\MOYNIHAN (D-N.Y.): I fear these are young people who read Soldiers of Fortune magazine and have been told you could make your fortune in a war in Central America. You can't.

O'CONNOR: According to the Sandinista government, one of the dead men carried a map showing that the downed helicopter had taken off from the main airport in Honduras and had gone to a Honduran airfield recently upgraded by the U.S. before crossing into Nicaragua. Yesterday, the people of the village of Santa Clara buried the four civilians who died in the attack. While Sandinistas talk of peace, too, they say they are preparing for future attacks. At a military parade yesterday, they displayed part of the equipment provided by Eastern bloc countries and part of their estimated 20,000-man army. Mike O'Connor, CBS News, Managua.